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AUTHOR Myroon, John L.
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ABSTRACT

Policy-making is viewed in this paper as a major mechanism for meeting the educational aspirations of the provincial publics and inducing improvements in the quality of education. The reconstructionist's transmittal and traditionalist's transformation ideological philosophies are merged as legitimate symbiotic functions of education; thereby giving rise to the proposal for provincial governments and education departments to adopt a "pro-retrospective" policy-making mode, with a higher priority ordering for the futures mode. Several provincial policies are examined in the Alberta context to ascertain the policy-making mode of the Alberta Department of Education. Some reasons are cited from literature that help explain why educators are generally reluctant to accept the prospective policy-making mode. Finally, nine recommendations are advanced and operational explication regarding each recommendation developed for improving provincial educational metapolicy (policy-making process) and the quality of policies through the "pro-retrospective" mode. The conclusion, and overall theme of the paper, suggests that if a "pro-retrospective" policy-making mode is not adopted by provincial governments and departments of education, we might be reliving yesterday tomorrow, instead of shaping tomorrow's future. (Author)

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pro-retrospective policymaking mode

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PROVINCIAL EDUCATION POLICYMAKING: SHAPING TOMORROW'S FUTURE OR RELIVING YESTERDAY TOMORROW?

BY

JOHN L. MYROON
Executive Director
Administrative Services Division
ALBERTA LABOUR
1003 - I.B.M. Building
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

FIRST CONGRESS ON EDUCATION CONFERENCE
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A B S T R A C T

Policymaking is viewed in this paper as a major mechanism for meeting the educational aspirations of the provincial publics and inducing improvements in the quality of education. The reconstructionist's transmittal and traditionalist's transformation ideological philosophies are merged as legitimate symbiotic functions of education; thereby giving rise to the proposal for provincial governments and education departments to adopt a "pro-retrospective" policymaking mode, with a higher priority ordering for the futures mode. Several provincial policies are examined in the Alberta context to ascertain the policymaking mode of the Alberta Department of Education. Some reasons are cited from literature that help explain why educators are generally reluctant to accept the prospective policymaking mode. Finally, nine recommendations are advanced and operational explication regarding each recommendation developed for improving provincial educational metapolicy (policymaking process) and the quality of policies through the "pro-retrospective" mode. The conclusion, and overall theme of the paper, suggests that if a "pro-retrospective" policymaking mode is not adopted by provincial governments and departments of education, we might be reliving yesterday tomorrow, instead of shaping tomorrow's future.

PROVINCINCIAL EDUCATIONAL POLICYMAKING: SHAPING TOMORROW'S FUTURE OR RELIVING YESTERDAY TOMORROW?

INTRODUCTION

> The world has so far survived and benefited from a succession of revolutionary innovations in agriculture, industry, medicine, transportation and communications. A corresponding educational revolution is long overdue, and for lack of it the whole world is paying a heavy price (Coombs, 1975:119).

> The world educational crisis is a growth crisis. It reveals a change taking place in humanity. Like a birth, it cannot be stopped. On the other hand, it is a process which can be assisted through an understanding of its nature and the qualitative factors involved. This also provides an opportunity for effective action in the direction of what is happening (Bertaux, 1975:57).

The above two quotations suggest, as do numerous other sources, that education is not in a preferred state. Policy is often recognized as the major mechanism for inducing improvements so as to move toward the preferred state. As a result of this proposition, the purpose of this paper is to ascertain whether provincial education departments in Canada are utilizing the most appropriate and effective policymaking mode for meeting the needs of comtemporary society and then to propose some general suggestions that might improve the process of policymaking and quality of policies. In order to accomplish this purpose, the paper is developed in five integrated sections: (1) identification of the major functions of education and the perceived effects on policymaking, (2) a case is presented for accepting both, transformation and transmittal, as compatible functions, giving rise to a proposal for a "pro-retrospective" policymaking mode, with a higher priority ordering for the proactive/futures mode, (3) determination of the policy making mode of Alberta Education as a case study, (4)identification of some of the reasons why educators are generally reluctant to accept the prospective or futures mode, and (5) a few general suggestions are given for improving the policymaking process and quality of policies generated by provincial education ministries. What then are the functions of education?

FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON POLICYMAKING

There is a constant raging public debate as to the appropriate function(s) of contemporary public education. The direction, thrust, and content of public policymaking is usually perceived to be concomitant with the prevailing accepted purpose(s) or function(s) of the dominant society. In discussing the effect of curriculum policymaking, Taba (1962:16) supports this premise when she states, "Society's concept of the function of the public school determines to a great extent what kind of curriculum schools will have." The debate about educational functions identifies multiple purposes, but in the context of this paper only two broad aims are identified. These can be viewed as dichotomous ends of a continuum: preserving and transmitting of cultural heritage and knowledge (conservation), on the one hand, and transforming culture and knowledge (change), on the other (Taba, 1962:18-30 and Halsey, 1975:14).

The traditionalists claim that the school should transmit the existing culture for educational institutions can pursue only those aims that society considers desirable, and as such, the aims of education are conservative. The reconstructionists, on the other hand, argue that:

> It is the task of educators to analyze the social trends, to discern the problems society is facing, to speculate on the consequences of the current social dynamics, and to project the values and goals that need to be sought...tradition is a poor guide...They must translate this knowledge of society into educational policy...(Taba, 1962:27).

Since the accepted function determines the nature and content of educational policy, it is imperative that the policymaker accept the most appropriate function(s) or the optimal or most satisficing "mix" of functions.

A CASE FOR AN APPROPRIATE TRANSFORMATION/TRANSMITTAL MIX OF FUNCTIONS

This paper proposes that the appropriate transformation/transmittal mix of functions for education in today's contemporary society should assign a higher priority to the transformation of culture and knowledge, and as such, may be labelled the "change", "innovation", or "futures" function. The transmittal function, however, is not rejected, but rather, it is felt that exclusive reliance on the "traditional" function is dysfunctional to society. The "futures" function must be given priority over the conservation function. Bossetti (1973:18) supports this proposition when he exhorts that educational planning should be considered "...as a means for injecting a futures perspective and increased rationality into the policymaking process."

The transmittal of culture is a legitimate and appropriate function when society is in a static, conservative, traditional, and somewhat primitive form. Trump (1967:18) stated that "...static educational forms are inadequate forms...they are convinced of the necessity of basic changes in schools." However, present Canadian society is not in a static form. Traditional societies are characterized by "...a system of adaptation to the environment which maximizes dependence on genetic inheritance (Halsey, 1975:15). In traditional societies, there tends to exist a set of stable beliefs or ideas - includes a view of man and the world as static and unchanging (UNESCO, 1975:73). Halsey further states that the factors which give rise to change-specialization, unequal social distribution and allocation of resources to research - are not present in traditional societies (1975:15).

Complex-modern-contemporary-affluent societies, on the other hand, have all three characteristics which, in turn, "...carries the potential for educationally induced change" (Halsey, 1975:15). As one moves through the continuum of societies from the traditional to the modern-complex, Halsey argues

that the function of education changes its character from simple preservation and transmission of culture to a function of increasingly complex transformation, dissemination, and innovation (Halsey, 1975:16). This does not mean that culture is not perserved, but instead, cultural change rather than stability becomes the norm. The court ruling concerning education in an Alberta Mennonite community suggests that within the mosaic fabric of modern Canadian society we still have traditional sub-cultures within the larger complex culture (Edmonton Report, March 15, 1978:32-33). Husen, in discussing the symbiotic relationship of educational, social, and economic policies in Sweden validated the above position when he wrote, "Education seems to have its proper place in an inherent sequence of cultural and social transformation (Husen, 1975:75). Further Riffel has argued that:

> As the pace of social change has quickened and become more turbulent...it has become more apparent that better social forecasting is essential if the tendency to plan education on an ad hoc basis is to be overcome...forecasts can help the policymaker. (Riffel, 1971:95).

Berghofer, in analyzing the writings of "futurists" like Polak, Mead, Toffler, Memford, Illick, and Platt, strongly advocated the prospective or futures mode of educational policymaking. He suggested that if contemporary-technological society is to persist indefinitely in a closed ecological system then we might be "...on a collision course with catastrophe." (Berghofer, 1972:24). P. Dror contends that there is no other organization where the future is a more central and basic variable and integral part of the main function then in education. She has concluded that, "The primary aim of education makes, therefore, the study of the future the most important variable and central theme in the planning and implementation of educational policies"(Dror, 1971:201). Y. Dror (1971b:17) supports his wife's proposition

by contending that,"to direct change under conditions of rapid social transformation constitutes a main challenge facing policymaking at present and in the foreseeable future." Even if we do not have total control over the future, we still must advocate futures-oriented policymaking and policies along with retrospective policies for as Helmer (1972:154) observed:

> Although our control over the future is marginal...we have learned from the economists that small marginal adjustments in planning the domestic affairs of a nation can make all the difference between misery and contentedness for large segments of its people.

Hence, the major tenant of this paper is that educational policymaking must place emphasis and a new higher order priority on the "futures" or prospective (also proactive) mode rather than relying exclusively on the retrospective (also reactive) or current mode. In essence, this implies that the metapolicy of public policymaking should be an appropriate "pro-retrospective mix" mode, with a higher order priority on the prospective, rather than an exclusive reliance on the retrospective mode. Otherwise, we might be reliving yesterday tomorrow! This position is well supported by Mead (1972:50) when she states, "If we are to build a prefigurative culture in which the past is instrumental rather than coercive, we must change the location of the future." Toffler further supports this concept in his proposition that, "We should not neglect the past but rather we must learn to shape the future through the past, otherwise we will be forced to relive and endure history" (Toffler, 1972:3). The next logical question, then, is what mode of policymaking do Canadian departments of education utilize? This paper uses the Alberta Department of Education as a case study to analyze this question.

SOME CASE STUDIES OF THE POLICYMAKING MODE UTILIZED BY THE ALBERTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Alberta Education, by virtue of the political process and tradition, is the chief influencing force of educational public policies. Public policy, in the words of Dye (1975:1), "...is whatever governments choose to do." Stringham (1974:17) operationally defined policy as "...a major guideline for future discretionary action. It is generalized, philosophically-based, and implies an intention and pattern for taking action" If one can accept the premise that the senior civil service of any government ministry is normally the "life line" of the Minister, then it follows that Alberta Education is the main force in shaping and formulating educational policy.

If the prime purpose of education is to shape the future (Dror, 1971:201), as suggested earlier, then Alberta Education should mainly be utilizing the prospective "futures" and proactive mode of policymaking. Batchler, Sackney, and Sequin (1975:5) in conducting a policy analysis on "Student Access To Information About Secondary School Programs" reached a conclusion that "...policy development by the Department of Education (Alberta) is incremental in nature and is based upon the retrospective mode." The subsequent case studies strongly support that conclusion. Many examples can be given to illustrate the use of the retrospective mode, which is premised on the belief that the function of education is to transmit culture and knowledge rather than to transform. In all fairness, however, there are some examples of futures-oriented and proactive policymaking. Nevertheless, most policies are simply incremental responses and reactions to a problem that has existed for some time-thereby supporting the contention that most policies are retrospective and incremental. Consider accreditation as an initial example.

Accreditation and School Achievement

In February of 1972, the then Minister of Education announced that departmental examinations will be terminated in 1973 with an option for 1972.

This meant that all schools would assign final grades for all high school students, and as such, all schools were automatically accredited. To begin with, this policy statement was a response to longstanding external pressures to remove department examinations. Further, this statement was not a policy, but rather, only megapolicy; no accreditation policy had been formulated prior to the announcement of the megapolicy. What would happen if a segment of a school community complained about the low standards of their school? What if they refused to send their children to school because of so-called low standards? Likely, panic and confusion would result! This inability to respond would likely be a result of no clear provincial policy regarding accreditation, only a megapolicy statement.

As a matter of fact, there has developed in the last couple of years, a public concern over achievement. The departmental position did not change until late 1976 when the Minister responded to public pressure regarding achievement standards and the general "back to the basics" movement. In reaction, the Minister struck a task force called MACOSA (Minister's Advisory Committee on School Achievement) in October, 1976 which had the responsibility of studying the achievement problem and making recommendations.

In October of 1977 one of MACOSA's commissioned studies was made public; the major recommendation was "That the Minister extend the provisions of the existing accreditation policy for a minimum of three years, subject to review after that period, and further, that the necessary steps be taken to enhance the effectiveness of the existing policy with regard to student evaluation." (Alberta Grade 12 Examination Study, 1977:XIV). The report went on further to suggest that a return to the pre-1973 form of exams was not the answer to educational quality. However, all policy changes in regard to accreditation and student achievement are being held in abeyance until after the final

report of MACOSA is issued in December of 1978. This chronological tracing, therefore, clearly illustrates that the department reacted incrementally and retrospectively to the same problem from 1970 up to at least late 1978. The question which remains now is: Will Alberta Education effect prospective and proactive policy changes to deal with accreditation and achievement standards upon the completion of MACOSA?

Back To The Basics

Another policy issue that has been "up-front" in Alberta recently has been what is popularily called the "Back to The Basics" movement (related to achievement and accreditation). The advocates of the movement suggest that the 1960's liberalization of schooling and society in general has resulted in a general decline of educational quality to where students cannot read, cannot write, cannot add and subtract, have no discipline, respect and standards, etc. They further argue that the solution is a return to the "basics" where the curriculum is structured, the content is specified, discipline standards enforced, etc. How has the department responded in a policy sense?

Again, the department has assumed an incremental, reactive and retrospective approach to resolving the policy issue of "basics". The Curriculum branch is surely and slowly (1) building structure into the curriculum, (2) laying out clear specifications for content and (3) replacing "conceptial" math with the old "pragmatic" math at all grade levels. As well, during the height of the movement, the Minister of Education announced that the department will be requiring all grade 12 student to write high school power-type exams on a cyclical basis which test all the major concepts and skills taught during the entire high school years. Again, the department is developing policy on a reactive and retrospective basis.

The only exception was the public statement made by Dr. E.K. Hawkesworth, Deputy Minister of Education, during Education Week, to a group of education students at the University. His interesting and controversial remark regarding "basics" was that the "...demand for a return to structure and standards in teaching was not a parental groundswell", but rather "...a conservative-inspired 'internal conspiracy'" (Saint John's Edmonton Report, March 24, 1978:31). There are two interpretations to this statement. One, it was a "tongue-in-cheek" type of statement and hence the department position of returning to the basics as demanded would stay in tact. The other interpretation suggests that the Deputy Minister is taking a prospective and proactive view regarding basics. If so, it would be an indication of a shift in the policymaking mode of Alberta Education.

Fundamental Purpose of Education

As developed earlier, the two major dichotomously opposed purposes of education are to transmit culture, knowledge and skills on the one hand and transform, on the other. A department of education that believes exclusively in the transmittal role must adopt, by virtue of the underlying belief system a retrospective, reactive and incremental approach to policymaking. A department that believes exclusively in transformation must adopt a prospective and proactive policymaking mode.

In 1976 the Mennonite Holdeman Sect requested permission from the Minister of Education to establish their own school so that their children would be taught only the values, skills and knowledge inherent to the Mennonite belief system (Edmonton Report, January 30, 1978:29). No action was taken until the Holdeman Sect built their own "Kneehill Christian School" in Linden and withdrew 121 of their children from the public school. As a result, the Three Hills

School division #60 charged one of the parents, Elmer Wiebe, with truancy from a public school (pursuant to the School Act.) Judge Oliver dismissed the case stating that the sect has the right to send their children to their own school, thereby ensuring that the values of the dominant society would not be indoctinated into the children. The Bill of Rights was used in the judgement - giving parents the right to decide what their children should learn. This judgement seems reasonable in a context of a stable, static, traditional and primitive society which the Mennonite Sect represents. It seemed likely, stated the Saint John's Edmonton Report (March 13, 1978:32), that "the government would appeal this decision." It was supposed that the government would appeal on the basis that responsibility for ensuring minimal quality of education for each individual Albertan youth who was resident, through the British North American Act, with the provincial government. Instead, the department decided to let the judgement stand and as well, introduced legislation to allow such schools to function (type 4 private school).

This writer's interpretation of the position of the department suggests that Alberta Education has abdicated its responsibility for ensuring a minimal level of schooling for children who will attend schools under the new legislation. If any one of these children decide in the future to "make-it" in the dominant contemporary society, they will not have the skills nor knowledge to survive. Alberta Education, again, has reacted retrospectively to the pressures of one lobby group.

PPBES/PAB

After conducting an extensive experiment with ten pilot school jurisdictions in 1970, the department had the opportunity to advocate and implement a policy requiring local school districts to engage in the use of PPBES (Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Evaluation Systems) and PAB (Program Accounting and Budgeting). This would have meant introducing a major management change into the operations of school districts for the improvement of decision making.

The Department chose, instead, only to require jurisdictions to report financial information using a P A B format. Once again, the Department had assumed a reactive/retrospective policymaking stance of responding to needs that were communicated through pressure and lobbying. These were immediate needs only, and not long-term. Since there was some pressure not to move to PPBES provincially and no pressure to move in PPBES, the Department adopted a policy of only regulating and advancing fiscal accounting and financial manangement.

Rewriting of the School Act

Another example of reacting to immediate or past needs of clients and/or pressure groups rather than initiating needed change and "shaping" through policy, was the writing of the 1970 School Act. Stringham (1974:118) stated that it was the Alberta School Trustees' Association.. ". . . that publically requested rewriting of the School Act in November of 1970", and not a policy initiative of the Department. As well it must be mentioned that as a result of being incremental and retrospectively reactive in its development, the School Act is now being constantly revised and changed.

Other Policy Issues

Let us view other policy areas. What about the substantive content and values being taught to students in Alberta classrooms? What kind of skills, knowledge, and values do we want today's children - tomorrow's leaders to have? What about educational delivery systems? This raises the question of alternative schools. Has Alberta Education taken a policy stance suggesting that alternative schools should be considered? The issue of compulsory attendance has been a problem plaguing educators for decades. Has Alberta Education studied the question or even acknowledged it? By adopting a policy of non-compulsory attendance the Department could substantially and meaningfully be "shaping" the values and attitudes of tomorrow's citizens.

Much has been written by leading social and educational thinkers regarding educational policy changes. A recent publication, Education On The Move, written for the International Commission on the Development of Education by some 107 internationally noted educators and other social scientists, has identified a large number of areas of education that require change, improvement, and innovation if schooling is to develop persons who can successfully cope and function in tomorrow's complex, confusing, and uncertain industrial environment. One must, then, ask the question: Is Alberta Education formulating, strategizing, and implementing policies in order for schooling to adequately prepare our children for tomorrow's society? Based upon the above observations and following comments, there is little evidence to suggest that this is the case. It appears that there is some megapolicy and a somewhat nebulous policy on decentralization of curriculum decision making but strategization and implementation are desperately lacking.

What about student values and personalities? The Department has a megapolicy of "valuing" but no policy regarding values. What about student maladjustment and personality? The Department was led by stakeholder pressures and experiences from Oregon regarding the replacement of Opportunity Rooms by Resource Rooms.

What about organizational structures within the existing public education system? Are there any policies that provide direction and guidelines in organizing schools so as to ensure that they would be student-oriented and geared to meet present and future student needs rather than meeting existing organizational, administrative and teacher needs? One could ask many more such policy questions! It is the conclusion of this writer that Alberta Education has numerous retrospective megapolicies but very few prospective, concrete policies that address the real and significant issues of education

and society today and tomorrow. However, such is not always the case.

There are several examples of prospective oriented policy. The government, and hence departmental policy of decentralization (or perhaps more truly devolution) is prospective oriented. In fairness, also, it must be noted that the Special Credits and Work Experience (Junior-Senior High School Handbook) policies, guidelines and rules are two excellent examples of prospective policies. But these are exceptions rather than the rule. There is one thrust, however, that could result in more prospective policy consideration; that is the Planning and Research Branch. By virtue of its inherent function, the Planning and Research Branch (three years old) has attempted to provide a long-range, prospective-based problem solving approach to policy issues. The Planning and Research Branch has exerted effort in studies which adequately described the problem, identified alternatives and made long and short range recommendations. Because the Planning and Research Branch is still in its formative years very little effort has been expended in influencing and developing prospective policy based upon the findings and recommendations of funded studies. As the Planning and Research Branch matures as an organizational entity it is possible that it will develop the capacity to influence the development of prospective policymaking in Alberta Education. As with others, it appears, then, other than a few exceptions, Alberta Education's metapolicy is mostly retrospective megapolicy developed on an ad hoc, reactive and incremental basis. The preceeding section concluded by advocating that educational policymaking by provicial departments ought to be prospectively-oriented with an appropriate mixture of retrospective policymaking - but not locked into a predominantly retrospective mode. Since Alberta Education is representative of government action, and since public policy is what governments choose to do or

not to do (Dye, 1975:1), it should be the responsibility of Alberta Education to adopt a "proretrospective" mode of policymaking. What is the case in other Canadian provinces? This paper assumes that the same circumstances exist in all the other Canadian provinces. Why should Alberta Education be so reluctant to change its policy perspective from "perservors" of existing values and policies to "shapers" of tomorrow's values through prospective policies with a proper mix of perservation?

REASONS FOR RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT, IN PART OR WHOLE, THE PROSPECTIVE-PROACTIVE MODE FOR POLICYMAKING

The inability, or the unrecognized need to use a proactive-prospective mode for policymaking is not confined to Alberta Education alone. The belief that education should transmit culture is inherent in the value systems of many educators and hence the natural and obvious adoption of the retrospective mode of policymaking. In order to postulate some suggestions for adopting a pro-retrospective policymaking mix, it is necessary to identify the specific reasons for the reluctance.

Batcheler, et. al. (1975:3-4) identified some specific reasons why policy-making and policies in Alberta Education are incremental, retrospective and ad hoc: politically expedient, causes minimal conflict, maintains stability and it preserves the existing system. Toffler (1972:8) presented an intriguing theory regarding the propensity of individuals and organizations to be locked into the past and hence neglect the future, which he calls "middle-age" imperialism." He claims that day-to-day operating decision making is monopolized by middle-aged men and because of the characteristics and nature of persons in this age bracket, policymaking is not futures oriented. Janne and Roggemans (1975:164), paraphrasing Rogers, isolated six variables for slowness of education to adopt to innovations: (1) relative advantage, (2) compatability, (3) divisibility,

(4) complexity, (5) communicability, and (6) type of decision making. Dror (1968:123) identified three major reasons: (1) ideologies, (2) vested interests in status quo, and (3) inertia of individual and social units. It appears that education today is ". . . a system in which 19th century methods are used to teach 20th century youngsters, most of whom will live the major portion of their adult and productive years in the 21st century" (R. Dror, 1971:201).

Speaking specifically to futures-oriented policymaking, Dror (1971b:37-38) identified nine general barriers to the acceptance of "good" policymaking: (1) lack of belief in the ability of science to be of help, (2) strong taboos and ritualistic attachments to institutions, (3) socio-culture distance between scientists and policymakers, (4) incapacity to understand science contributions to policymakers, (5) tendency to ignore scientific contribution as a whole, (6) bad experience with scientists, (7) bad experience with the misuse of scientific jargon and quantitative techniques, (8) discord between the formats of good policy studies and the habits of policymaking, and (9) a correct feeling that the development of policysciences and the increasing use of policy sciences in policymaking are not technical changes, but involve some shifts in power. R. Dror, in her article, "The Resistance to Change of Educational Administration," summarized the common reasons for educators resistance to change as: (1) dependence of education on the environment, (2) lack of research and development in education, (3) educational administrators are authority figures, (4) social and organizational structures in which teachers work, (5) misleading impression that we are already engaged in comprehensive planning, (6) size, (7) fiscal incentives, (8) psychological forces, (9) systems approach, (10) teachers, and (11) parents (R. Dror, 1971:202-209).

Although all of these factors do not apply necessarily to provincial

departments of education, they are, nevertheless, indicative of the multiplicity of barriers to long-range and prospective policymaking. Other factors, also, are evident in the environment of provincial departments of education: political ramifications, subjectivity or intangibility of education, long turn-around time from policy to printing of texts, teacher retraining and program evaluation, lack of agreement on goals, and complexity of the educational task.

Educators, in general, and provincial departments, in particular, must change to adopt a prospective mode with an appropriate mix of retrospective policymaking, if education is to provide the kind of skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for today's students to live in a dynamic and complex society tomorrow. As Hillson describes, "In any vital organization such as schools, change and modification are constantly needed to meet the demands of a dynamic society " (Hillson, 1965:1). To formulate and implement retrospective policies implies that today's children will not be ready for living and working tomorrow. What kinds of things, then, should education departments consider in order to ensure that educational policies not only reflect the values of today, but prescribe the desirable values of tomorrow?

TOWARD AN IMPROVED POLICYMAKING PROCESS AND QUALITY OF POLICIES VIA A PRO-RETROSPECTIVE POLICYMAKING MODE MIX

James Conant, in attempting to analyze the shaping of educational policy stated that ". . . there will be more radical changes in the future and this in turn means that our old methods of determining educational policy needs drastic revision to meet the impact of educational revolutions" (Conant,(1964:4). Without elaborating in great length, several generalized attitudinal and value changes need to occur in order for provincial departments to engage in an improved policymaking process and quality of policies. The proposal, generally, is to accept the "futures" or prospective mode in addition to retaining the "preservation" mode when and where necessary.

Acceptance of the Dual Function of Education

Education not only transmits culture and knowledge, but also transforms culture. Effective policymaking, therefore, must utilize a fine mix of both functions. As a result, educational policymaking must often be innovative and perform the "cutting edge" function of shaping the future. R. Dror stated that we have the future in our hand for man has become ". . . a trustee of evolution on this earth"(R. Dror, 1971:209). Further, Smith (1973:197) claims that "Governmental policies are designed to induce changes in society." Not only must educational policymakers adopt a pro-retrospective mode for policies but a high priority must be given for the prospective mode; this model must replace the retrospective mode which is presently used almost exclusively.

As Helmer (1972:155) claimed, ". . . the means of attaining these futures, or at least of raising their probability of occurence as much as possible (is) through appropriate policies and programs." In the words of Toffler:

> If we do not learn from history, we shall be compelled to relive it. True. But if we do not change the future, we shall be compelled to endure it. And that could be worse (1972:3).

Again, it is the stated position of the paper that education must become receptive to "futures" policymaking and policies for we are in an era of rapidly escalating societal change where the future appears to be arriving almost prematurely. As Keniston (1973:243) stated:

> We are in the midst of a major social transformation that is taking us out of an industrial society into the postindustrial, technological, postmodern, superindustrial, or, in Brezinski's terms, 'technetronic' society of the future.

In order for departments of education to adopt a pro-retrospective mode of policymaking with a higher priority ordering for the prospective, it is

essential to accept the dual function belief of education.

Incremental Model Should Be Replaced By The Judicial Use of all Models

Doern and Wilson (1974:341) stated that the policymaking process ". . . has been too incremental" in education. Coombs (1975:118) adds:

> The old strategy of linear expansion has obviously outlived its usefulness and must be replaced. . . To go on simply. . . would be a formula for disaster. . . and deepen the existing educational crisis.

Jantsch echoed these concerns when he wrote, ". . . we will remain locked into the powerful dynamics of linear thinking and action if we don't learn how to regroup our values and norms. . ."(Jantsch, 1970:32). As a result, Landau (1975:1) claimed that "In recent times it appears that the general public has moved ahead of the government's position." Dye (1975:17-39) identified seven models that can be used for policy formulation and analysis: systems, elite, group, rational decision making, incrementalism, game and institutionalism. Archibald (1970:73) feels that use of the clinical approach holds a ". . . promise of strengthening policy analysis," while Duke (1974:9) suggests that all of Dye's models are components of the total decision system and as such educational policymaking should be utilizing all models rather than the linear thinking of incrementalism.

Understanding and Accepting the Meta-Megapolicy Concept Mix of Policymaking

Prior to being able to improve policymaking, the policymaker must understand the conceptualization of the policymaking process. The following paradigmatic schema depicted in Figure 1 (Kozakewich, Myroon and Tymko, 1977:4) is basic to explaining and understanding adequate policymaking. It is the position of this paper that all policymakers ought to internalize the mechanisms of Figure 1 prior to engagement in policy analysis and development.

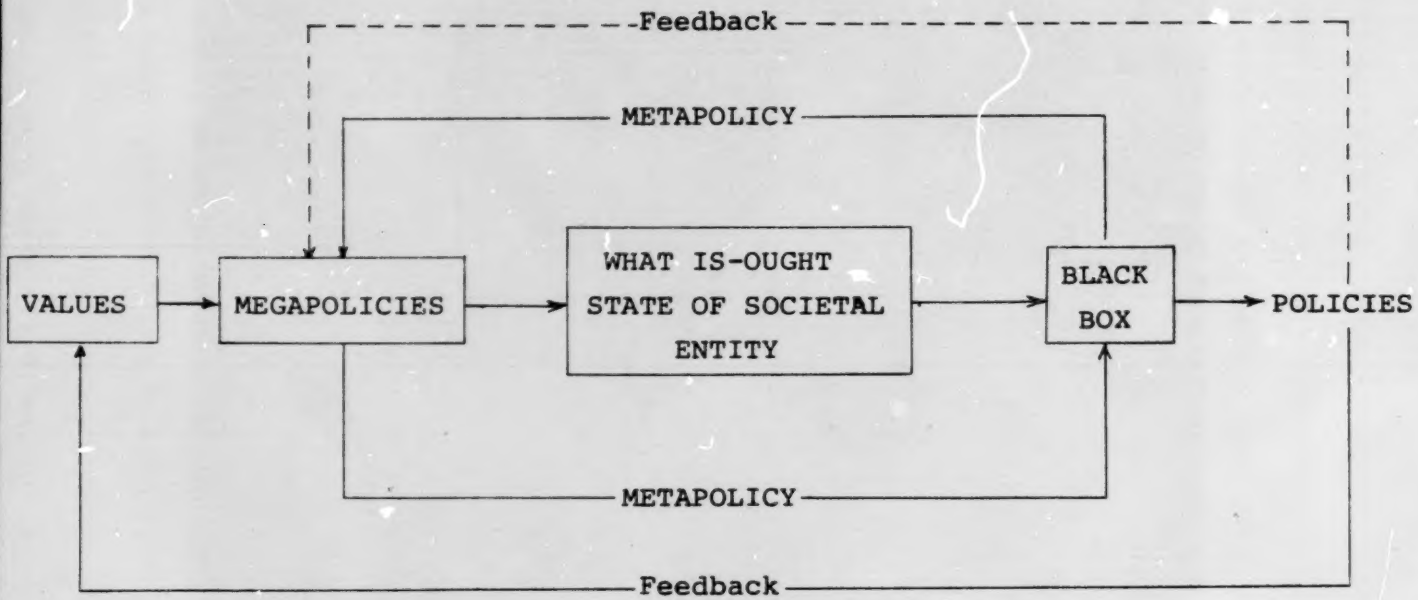

Figure 1

META-MEGAPOLICY: A CONCEPT MIX

Following is an explanation of the paradigm.

The policymaking process must begin with the recognition and assessment of societal values. Values do not reside either in external objects or within the person; rather, they emerge from the interaction between a particular person and a particular portion of the environment (Scheibe, 1970:45). Dror (1968:164) calls this first phase "Processing Values" while Scheibe (1970:45) states that the identification of values operating in any particular situation derives from observations - the Process of Evaluation.

Values give rise to societal aspirations, ideals and desires which, in turn, are translated to megapolicies or masterpolicies (Dror, 1971a:164) or metagoals (Stringham, 1974:38). Megapolicy leads to an interplay of goals and the actual attainment of goals; the result is a discrepancy or gap between the "what is" and "what ought to be" state of societal entity. The discrepancy, again, after being inputted into the policymaking process (shown by the "white box" in Figure 1), should give rise to discrete and concrete policies. Meta-policy, or the policy on policymaking (Dror, 1971b:74) is the process for improving policymaking. For further elaboration of the Meta-mega concept mix the reader is referred to the Kozakewich et. al. paper. It is through an understanding and internalization of these environmental relationships that a policymaker can accept and utilize the pro-retrospective policymaking mode, with a higher priority ordering for the futures mode.

Understanding and Accepting The Developmental Construct for Operationalization of Improved Policies

An understanding and acceptance of the overall environmental context of policymaking does not, in itself, ensure that policymaking would be improved; as well, it is necessary to understand and accept the developmental construct which operationalizes improved policymaking. A developmental construct provides a conceptual framework through which reality can be attained. The

construct enables the policymaker, as well as the policy analyst, to find his way through the complexities of the total situation in which he operates in a logical and systematic fashion, rather than "muddling-through". In essence, states Lasswell (1971:67) a developmental construct proposes an orderly way of revealing the contours of reality. It is through an understanding of these contours (5 dimensions in Figure 2) that an educational policymaker can adopt a pro-retrospective policymaking mode and hence improve the policymaking process and quality of policies. The construct, as shown in Figure 2 (Kosakewich, Myroon and Tymko, 1977:10) identifies five dimensions or contours of reality: (1) functional relationship levels, (2) arenas, (3) time frame, (4) participants, and (5) systems context; a brief explication of each follows:

Functional relationship levels may best be defined as levels of abstraction for structuring and unfolding the rationality of creative action (Jantsch, 1970:39). Simply stated, functional relationship levels are those levels or stages of activity that must be gone through in order to effectively translate existing societal values and norms into meaningful policy (Jantsch, 1970:39). The functional relationship dimension relates to the parameter of "at what level or stage?" The levels are policy formulation, strategization, and implementation.

An arena is a situation in which officials are involved (Lasswell, 1970:8). Since policymaking can take place in one or more environments or situations, identification of these environments or situations within the developmental construct would determine the "where?" of policymaking.

The time frame is the third important dimension and as such answers the question of "when?" Time is best conceived as the time context of policymaking ranging from an arbitrary defined point in the past, retrospective, to

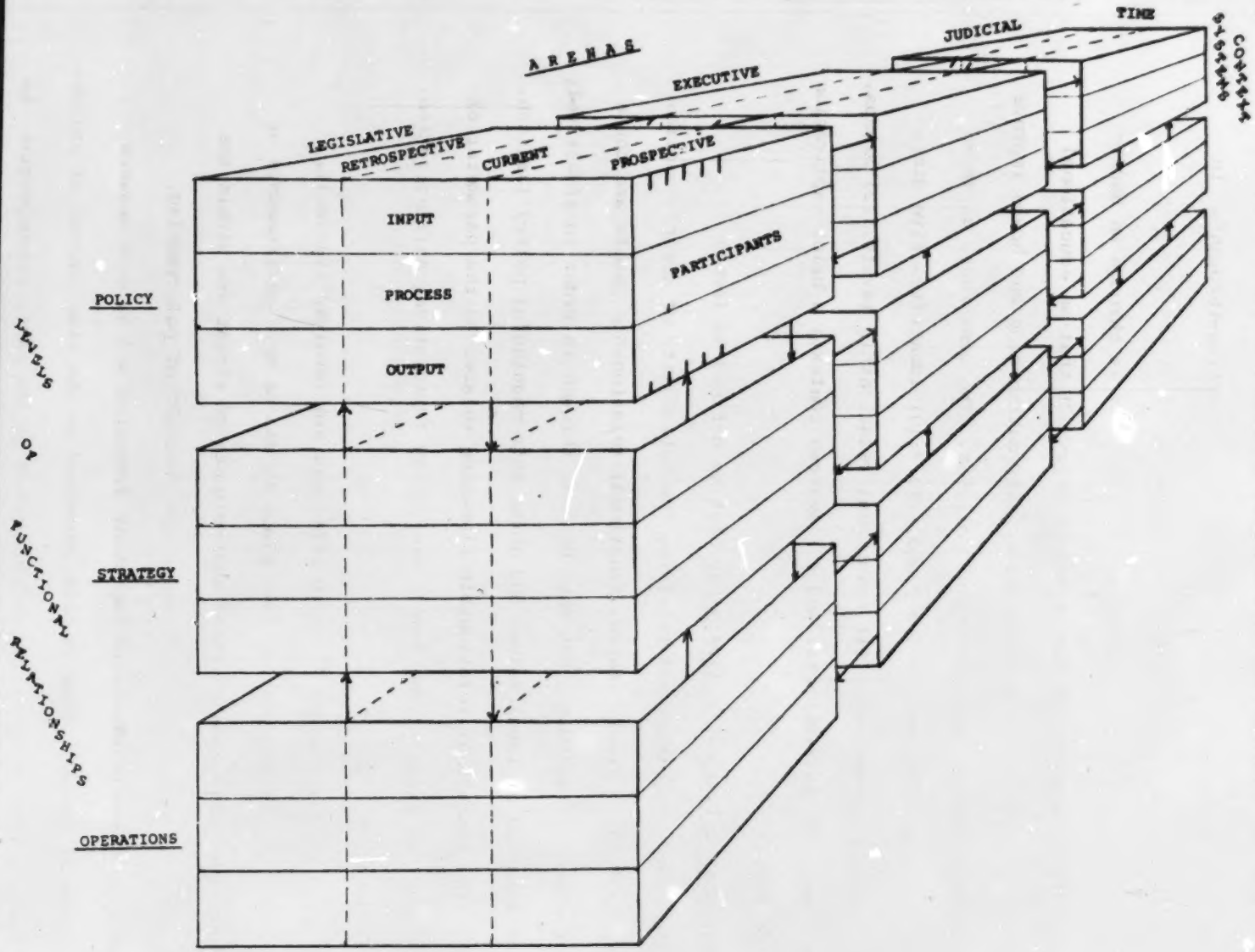

Figure 2

Policy Sciences Developmental Construct for
the Improvement of Public Policymaking

another arbitrarily defined point in the future, prospective (Stringham, 1974:37-56).

The functional relationship levels, arena, and time frame dimensions are the overriding dimensions of the construct and as such, give rise to its three-dimensional form. Two other factors, participants and systems context, need to be considered within the three major dimensions in order for the construct to meet the parameter requirements, and hence to facilitiate actual policy-making and analysis. No effective policymaking can be accomplished without considering the systems context of activity; the systems context dimension enables assessment of the "how" (input and process) and "to what effect" (outputs) of policymaking. Participants are all those who interact in policy-making in various arenas, at different functional relationship levels at any point in time.

Implicit within the developmental construct and meta-mega-policy concept mix are the 16 need areas identified by Dror (1968:217-248) for improving public policymaking - these apply equally well to any provincial department of education: (1) more metapolicymaking, (2) more learning feed-back, (3) more systematic and explicit determining of policy strategies, (4) more elaboration of operational goals, (5) more searching for alternatives, (6) more explicit establishing of cutoff horizons, which should cover a longer period of time, (7) more development of rational components, (8) more develop-ment of extrarational components, (9) more specific units in charge of system-atically evaluating and redesigning the policymaking system and its subsystems, (10) many more specific units explicitly in charge of thinking, longrange policymaking, surveying knowledge, and carrying out research and development about policies, (11) careful adjustment of the organizational and social

distances between units that make policy, that execute it, and that motivate the executing of it, (12) changes in the characteristics, roles, and contributions of the major units composing the policymaking structure, (13) changes in the aggregation function, (14) higher qualifications for policymaking manpower and much more input of knowledge and information, (15) more equipment, and (16) more energy and drive.

As well, Dror's (1968:163-196) "Optimal Model" stages are contained within the construct and the consideration and adoption of them should improve policymaking in any Canadian provincial department: (1) processing values, (2) processing reality, (3) processing problems, (4) surveying, processing and developing resources, (5) designing, evaluating and redesigning the policymaking system, (6) allocating problems, values and resources, (7) determining policymaking strategy, (8) suballocating resources, (9) establishing operational goals with priorities, (10) establishing a set of other significant values, with some order of priority, (11) preparing a set of major alternative policies, including some "good" ones, (12) preparing reliable predictions of the significant benefits and costs of the various alternatives, (13) comparing the predicted benefits and costs of the various alternatives, (13) comparing the predicted benefits and costs for the various alternatives and identifying the "best" ones, (14) evaluating the benefits and costs of the "best" alternatives and deciding whether they are "good" or "bad", (15) motivating the executing of the policy, (16) executing the policy, (17) evaluating policymaking after executing the policy, and (18) communication and feedback channels interconnecting all phases. Phases 1 to 7 are the metapolicymaking stage, phases 8 to 14 are the policymaking stage, phases 15 to 17 are the post-policymaking stage, while phase 18 is the communication network. Utilization of the developmental construct should not only improve the policymaking process and

quality of policies, but should also assist in the move to acceptance and use of the pro-retrospective mode for policymaking and policies.

Policy Planning and Research Units

Most provincial department of education have been establishing a research and policy planning capacity during the late sixties and early seventies. If provincial departments are to improve metapolicy and the ensuing policies, then it is imperative that the major thrust of these units is prospective, proactive and futures-oriented policymaking. By the very nature of being an integral component of an incrementally and retrospectively-based departmental structure the immediate pressure of the top-level decision makers could be to "fit" the policymaking mode of a Policy Planning and Research Branch into the usual retrospective mode. At the same time, however, the very nature of a Policy Planning and Research unit is such that futures-oriented, proactive and prospective policymaking ought to be an automatic,natural and inherent direction. There is no doubt that the machinery for prospective policymaking is available within the framework of a Policy Planning and Research unit. In Alberta, the Planning and Research Branch of Alberta Education has demonstrated this possibility; Advanced Education is more prospective oriented.

It is the view of this writer that the Policy Planning and Research units of provincial departments are the existing mechanisms which can be utilized to discard the traditional policymaking mode and develop and nurture a pro-retrospective mix approach. How can departmental Policy Planning and Research units be redirected so as to adopt a pro-retrospective policymaking mode with a higher order priority for the futures mode? The best means for attaining this policymaking stance is to convince top-level management (Deputy Ministers and Associate Deputy Ministers) and the legislators (namely the Ministers), through whatever means possible of the need for Policy Planning units and top decision makers to utilize such a policymaking mode.

Application of Computer Technology

Babrow (1970:123-134) suggests that the use of computer technology (hardware and software) could substantially improve the policymaking process and quality of policies. He lists five general contributions computers can make: (1) equalize bases for judgement, (2) reduce information overload, (3) map the future, (4) determine the requirements for realizing preferred futures, and (5) choose between alternative policies.

Recently an Interdepartmental Demographic Task Force headed up by the Planning Secretariat of the Alberta Department of Advanced Education has been commissioning computer simulation studies. For example, the Wright-Mansell model (University of Calgary) uses various economic and demographic historical data to forecast alternate economic and demographic futures scenarios. As well, CANGO (developed by Robert Ryzak of Toronto) and its associated sister model have policy sensing capacities; ie. the model is programmed to identify the demographic and social effects of any stated policy. Hence the application of computer technology could prove invaluable to educational policymaking.

Use of Social Indicators

Sheldon and Freeman (1970:107) claim that public policymaking can be improved by the use of social indicators by: (1) giving social problems more visibility, (2) making possible more informed judgements about priorities, and (3) providing insight into how different quality of life report measures of national well being are changing. These uses could be very valuable for provincial educational policymaking.

Acceptance of the Realities of Politics as Part of Policymaking

There has been a general acceptance on the part of many educators to feel that educational policymaking is distinctly separate from politics.

Haskew (1970:364), in advancing this argument, stated that many have treated educational ". . . policies as something springing from the forehead of Zeus." Acceptance of the "politicalness" of policy decisions should help policymaking. Cistone has confirmed the view that policymaking and politics operate within the reality of the same arena when he stated, "It is within this context (politics) that current educational policy is formulated, enacted and administered"(Cistone, 1972:1). Finally, Lowi (1970:320) argued, ". . . that it is the political process which ties all students of politics together including students of public policy."

Professional Development of Policymakers

In order to improve the policymaking process and quality of policies through the above 8 general recommendations a professional development in-service training program must be offered the personnel involved in policy formulation, strategization and implementation. Dror (1968:258) suggests that such training should deal with all aspects of knowledge and personality, including: (1) intellectual capacities, (2) explicit knowledge, (3) tacit knowledge, (4) patterns of behavior, (5) orientations and propensities, and (6) basic personality structures. He further states that training programs should develop such things as: "(a) capacities for conceptualization, abstract thinking, and considering problems in terms of probabilities, (b) knowing methods of prediction and ways of dealing with uncertainty, (c) a "feeling" for the possible, (d) a habit of listening to what others have to say, (e) an ability to tolerate ambiguity and a propensity to innovate, and (f) creativity, a store of energy, and integrity"(Dror, 1968:258). Improved qualifications through a training program should result in improved policymaking performance of the policymaker. Such a program is imperative for as Dror (1968:246) prophecized, ". . . without changes in the qualifications and performance of

the policymakers, most institutional improvements are doomed."

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Basically, the paper attempted to ascertain the mode of policy making in Alberta Education as a case study, and then to propose a few ways that the policymaking process and quality of policies could be improved in the context of any Canadian department of education. It was suggested that the function of education is not to exclusively transmit knowledge and culture, nor transform culture and knowledge; rather, it is a fine mix of both functions, a symbiotic relationship. In today's rather complex and dynamic Western industrial society, it is evident that futures-oriented and prospective policymaking and policies must receive a much higher priority ordering than merely responding to yesterday's values in an incremental and retrospective manner. Provincial education policymakers must accept and adopt a "pro-retrospective" mode of policymaking and policies with a higher priority ordering for the prospective mode. If not, then we might be reliving the past tomorrow!

Alberta Education, as probably other educational departments, appears to rely heavily upon the preservation or retrospective mode. Some reasons were advanced that might account for the reluctance to accept the futures mode. Finally, nine recommendations were highlighted for improving metapolicy and the quality of policies and hence, in adopting a futures mode, at least in part: (1) acceptance of the dual function of education, (2) rejection of the incremental model as the only model and utilization of all existing models, (3) understanding and accepting the meta-megapolicy concept mix, (4) understanding and accepting the developmental construct for policy realization and operationalization, (5) accentuating the prospective mode via policy planning units, (6) application of computer technology, (7) acceptance of the reality of politics as part of policymaking by all policymakers, (8) use of social

indicators, and (9) developing and offering a professional development program to provide policy training to policymaking personnel.

It is suggested that the above nine recommendations could overcome Dror's Second Law which states;

> While human capacities to shape their environment, society and human beings are rapidly increasing, policymaking capabilities to use those capacities remain the same (Y. Dror, 1971b:140)

In summation, then, if educational departments do not adopt a pro-retrospective mode of policymaking with a higher order priority for the proactive-futures mode in order to shape tomorrow's future, we shall all be forced to relive yesterday tomorrow! To make matters worse, as Toffler (1972:3) stated, ". . .if we do not change the future, we shall be compelled to endure it. And that could be worse."

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